CPD Dialogue on
What type of democratic practices are suitable for achieving the SDGs?

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Are citizens ready to approve democratically the policies necessary to reach the SDGs?

Some reservations from the view point of a hyper-democracy

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Does the Swiss government take the SDGs seriously?

- »Fortunately», so the Swiss government, are the SDGs only international «soft law»

- Switzerland does not (yet) have a comprehensive strategy for achieving the SDGs

- Western countries generally hope to achieve the SDGs without changing significantly their mode of production and consumption

- What to do?

- Democracy!
  Pressure from public opinion and civil society is imperative

SDGs: Challenges for Western countries

Three central questions:

1. How to reverse the worldwide ecological degradation?

2. How to achieve prosperity for all human beings of this world?

3. How to reduce inequality within and between countries?

Four central problems:

1. Ecology – Western standards cannot be globalized

2. Economy – Our mode of production and consumption is unsustainable

3. Inequality – pushback of the economic and political elites

4. Technology alone will not solve the problem – social and economic transformation is necessary

In Switzerland SDGs face a political hurdle race

- Some SDGs need new laws or even constitutional amendments
- Will the necessary laws and amendments convince a majority of citizens and cantons?
- For constitutional amendments a popular vote is compulsory
- Amendments need a double majority of citizens + member states (so called «cantons»)

What citizens could use to further the SDGs

- 100'000 citizens can sign a proposal for an amendment and enforce a popular vote («initiative»)
- If Swiss parliament adopts a new law (which hinders the SDGs), 50'000 citizens can compel a popular vote about it («referendum»)
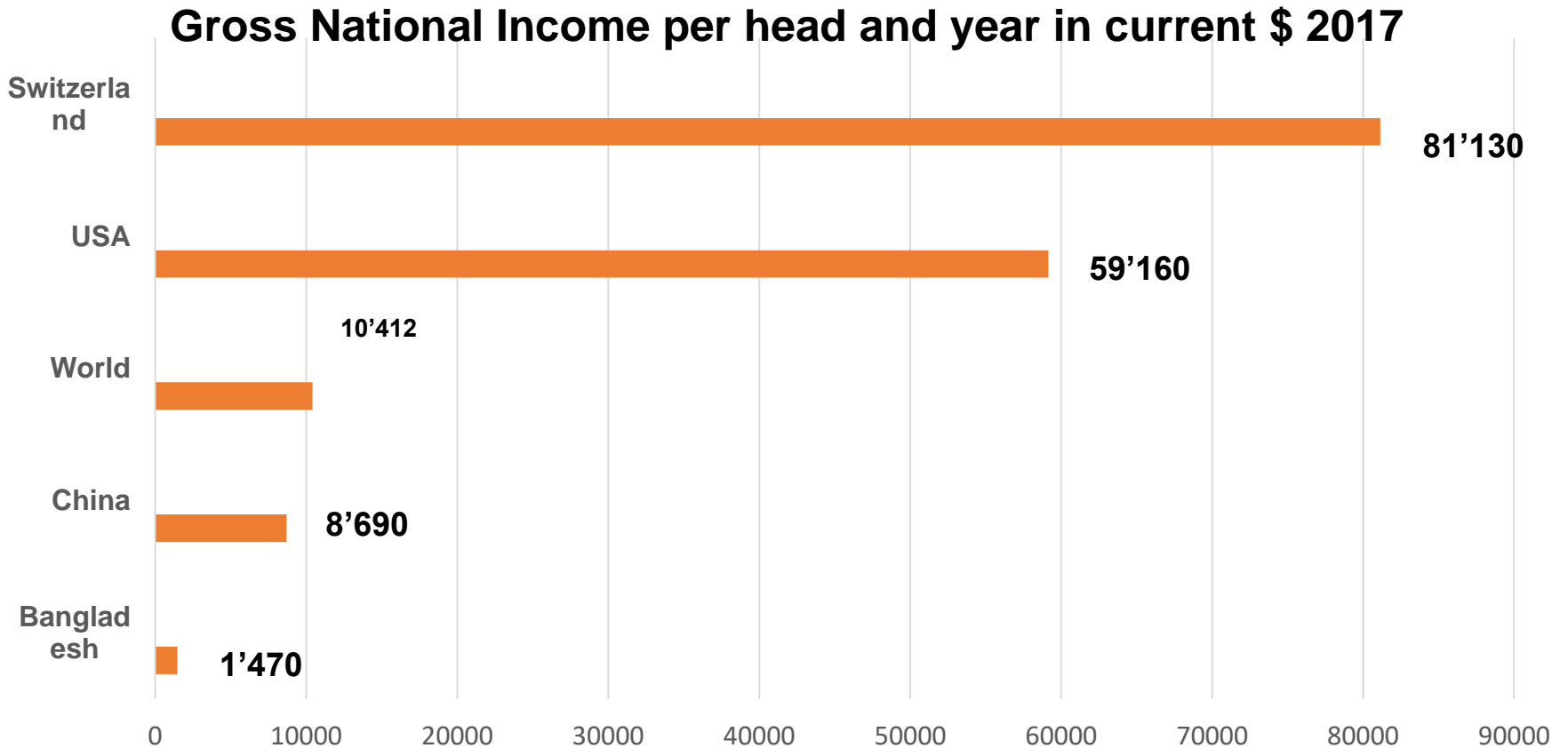
Ecological challenges

	Biocapacity PP in global hectares=gha	Ecological Footprint PP in gha	Total Footprint as number of earths
Switzerland	**1.0**	**4.7**	**2.9**
USA	**3.6**	**8.1**	**5.0**
Bangladesh	**0.4**	**0.8**	**0.5**
China	**1.0**	**3.6**	**2.2**
World	**1.6**	**2.8**	**1.7**

Global hectares = world's annual amount of biological production for human use and human waste assimilation, per hectare of biologically productive land and fisheries. Figures 2016   data from http://data.footprintnetwork.org/#/)

Flagrant global inequality

Switzerland, USA, World, China, Bangladesh
Data: World Bank

Gross National Income per head and year in current $ 2017

Country	GNI per head
Switzerland	81'130
USA	59'160
World	10'412
China	8'690
Bangladesh	1'470

Actions required to achieve some SDGs I

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy total

➢ **Requires in Switzerland the total decarbonization of energy production, industrial processes and transportation**

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

➢**Requires in Switzerland among other measures to put the productivity gains in reduced working hours, more public services and bigger budgets for international aid (development and climate finance)**

Actions required to achieve some SDGs II

SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

➢ **Realize SDG 12 and find ways to de-growth the rich countries without provoking the collapse of the world economy**

SDG 10: Reduce inequality [within and] among countries

➢ **Reform the WTO (more "policy space" for poor countries) and Re-regulate cross-border capital transactions**

SDG 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

➢ **Deliver finally the promised climate and development finance**

Plenty of resistances to expect

- **In democracies, a majority of citizens has to agree to the necessary policies**

- **Even if we divide the measures into single steps and decide on them one after the other, we will face a sceptical population, powerful foes, and difficult referendums**

- **Would a technocratic government without "democratic shackles" decide the necessary policies more quickly and easily? And could it impose them by decree?**

- **Take a look at China and its environmental policies**

How about the SDGs in Bangladesh?

Thank You